

Message

From: lyris@swrcb18.waterboards.ca.gov [lyris@swrcb18.waterboards.ca.gov]
Sent: 10/23/2018 3:34:46 PM
To: Smith, DavidW [Smith.DavidW@epa.gov]
Subject: Notice of Postponement of Public Hearing for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL

Hello subscribers:

On August 7, 2018, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted new statewide water quality objectives for bacteria for the protection of Water Contact Recreation (REC-1), including implementation options. These new bacteria water quality objectives apply to fresh, estuarine, and ocean waters and supersede existing numeric bacteria water quality objectives for the REC-1 beneficial use in all water quality control plans established by regional water quality control boards. The new water quality objectives establish *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) as the indicator of pathogens in freshwater and Enterococci as the indicator for estuarine waters and ocean waters and reflect a risk protection level of 32 illnesses per 1,000 recreators. The new bacteria objectives and implementation options will become effective under state law upon approval by the Office of Administrative Law, which is expected by January 2019.

With these new standards in mind, the Regional Water Board has decided to postpone the date of the public hearing to consider adoption of the Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL to Spring 2019 so that staff can reassess the extent of the pathogen impairment in the Russian River watershed considering the new statewide *E. coli* and Enterococci standards, which will replace the fecal coliform bacteria standards currently set forth in the North Coast Region's Basin Plan. Whatever the results of this re-assessment, Regional Water Board staff will recommend that at a minimum, the Regional Water Board adopt and incorporate into the Basin Plan a program of implementation to address known pathogen impairments and/or pathogen pollution in the Russian River and its tributaries, including provisions to correct pollution from cesspools and failing septic systems. The results of our re-assessment will take into consideration all the evidence of pathogen pollution collected during TMDL development, the weight of evidence supporting Regional Water Board staff's impairment determination under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, and alternatives for assessing impairment under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, which is consistent with the Water Quality Control Policy for Developing California's Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List. The re-assessment process is expected to be completed in a couple of months.

When updates on this process are available, Regional Water Board staff will provide notice via this subscriber list.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at (707) 576-2752 or by email at Charles.Reed@waterboards.ca.gov.

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